



STATE OF UTAH

JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR.
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY
84114-0601

GARY R. HEBERT
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

January 13, 2005

My Fellow Utahns:

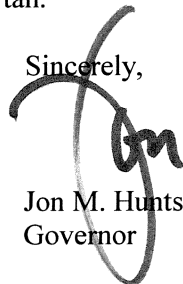
It is with great pleasure that I accept the *2005 Economic Report to the Governor*. I commend the Council of Economic Advisors for their service and for the research that went into the preparation of this annual report. The report serves as a critical resource for the state of Utah's research and planning needs during the upcoming year.

The last three years have been difficult from an employment perspective for the state, but 2004 has seen the beginnings of renewed job growth and I have a sense of optimism about our future. We live in the greatest state in America, and people all around the globe are on the verge of discovering us. From the outset of my campaign I vowed to listen and learn from the citizens of this great state. Repeatedly I heard themes from families of the desire to live, work, and raise their children in Utah, but economic situations often proved too difficult and forced them or their children out of state to find a job that paid a higher wage. This state has seen unprecedented growth that is not presently forecasted to slow down anytime soon. We must broaden our economic base, create new high-paying jobs that allow Utahns to remain at home and create revenue to the state that will allow us to pay the bills going forward.

I believe that the best way to maintain a high standard of living is to broaden and strengthen our state's economic foundation. Tax reform is at the top of my list of objectives because I am confident that a sound tax structure is the foundation to economic vitality, both for our existing businesses and for future business development. An appropriate tax structure must be competitive and ensure that the needs of the state are adequately funded, but in turn, serve as a catalyst, not an inhibitor for economic development. I will work with the legislature this year to pass a tax reform package that will fairly provide for the needs of generations to come.

I indicated along the campaign trail that I would be asking people who never thought about public service before, to contribute their time and talents. I have started down that pathway by including people from varying backgrounds to help in the transition process and they have given me invaluable feedback and recommendations. I will be calling on many of you in the future as well and encourage you to contribute in any way you can. I am honored and grateful for the trust you have bestowed on me as governor of this great state and welcome your counsel and advice as we move forward together toward a new day for Utah.

Sincerely,



Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.
Governor